DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 173 006 RC 011 471

AUTHOR Luevano, Richard L.
TITLE Chicano Studies and Chicanismo.
PUB DATE Nov 78
NOTE 18p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Activism; Change Strategies; Cultural Awareness; Cultural Background; *Culture Conflict; Ethnicity; Ethnic Studies; *Individual Development; *Mexican Americans; Self Actualization; Self Concept; *Self Determination; *Social Change; Values
IDENTIFIERS Chicano Movement; *Chicanos; *Chicano Studies

ABSTRACT

The Chicano Movement acts as a revitalization movement for involved individuals. Revitalization occurs when an individual perceives himself as part of a broader group, becomes aware of the problems confronting the group, and decides to do something to rectify the situation. This process begins with a crisis situation which overcomes the individual's present but unsatisfactory Mexican American mentality (e.g., when the problems facing Mexican Americans become intolerable). Such mental emancipation is a necessary step toward the evolution of a Chicano mentality. As the individual experiences his emancipation, social change begins, as is evidenced by the many Chicano strategies and movements of the 1960's and early 1970's. However, many of the social conditions previously stressful to Mexican Americans (the Viet Nam war, United Farm Workers problems, lack of bilingual education) have been defused and individual involvement in the Chicano Movement has consequently declined. It is the responsibility of those involved in Chicano Studies to take an active role in the development of Chicano mentality and the perpetuation of social change by exposing the Establishment's continuing suppression of the Mexican American. (Author/SB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED173006

APR 1979
ERIC/CRESS
RECEIVED

CHICANO STUDIES

AND CHICANISMO

Richard L. Luevano

California State College, Stanislaus

November 1978

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Richard L. Luevano

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

RC011471

Chicanismo - "The philosophy of social change
for the economical, educational,
political and social advancement
of la raza....a process that first
begins with self"

Introduction

"If only we had two hundred Chicano students on campus, then we could really change this institution, then we could demand that it meet the needs of our colonias and barrios. If only we had a Chicano Studies Department, then we could educate our gente from a Chicano perspective, then we could change the system. If only we...." That's the way I talked back in 1968. Today, due mainly to EOP, we have those two hundred students and more. Today we also have Chicano Studies, Raza Studies, Ethnic Studies, Mexican American Studies and, at some institutions, it appears a movement toward the establishment of Chicana Studies.

Pero ni modo, for today, I ask "What has happened to the Chicano Movement."[1] Que paso? What happened? Where has it gone? Ysidro Ramón Macias in his article "Nuestras Antepasados y el Movimiento" expounded on this question:

> the movement. the Chicano movement.
>
> donde estamos? donde vamos?
>
> these are some of the questions that we as chicanos have been asking ourselves. what has happened to that glorious struggle of carnales picketing safeway, the school boards, the walkouts, the student strikes and demands, the lets-go-back-to-the-community, viva Aztlán, organizing La Raza Unida; revamping UMAS, MASC, MAYO and whatever into MECHA, wearing khakis and french toes like the vato locos of the past, those vato locos who used to cruise by on their carruchas checking out the ruconas; y los pintos, ay los

pintos, those brief martyr symbols who promised to become the vanguard of the movement...

remember...

the movement...[2]

Realizing that we cannot have a movement without individual involvement, I endeavored to analyze the process of individual involvement. As a first step, I looked inward toward my own personal experience and involvement in the movement. In doing so, I came up with the following: I am a Chicano, but I was not born one. In becoming a Chicano, I have gone through, and am still going through, a changing process, a process which has affected every part of my being. My internal change caused me to ask myself, "What makes the individual change his present mentality,[3] develop a Chicano mentality, and become an activist for social change?" I struggled long and hard for answers to these questions, and now I would like to share them with you. In doing so, I would also like to suggest some avenues that may help us perpetuate this change within Chicanos so that all that has been gained is not lost but will continue to grow in a positive direction.

This paper, then, examines the Chicano Movement in relation to the process of individual involvement. Furthermore, this paper attempts to examine the individual's involvement in the Chicano Movement as a revitalization movement.[4] It further argues that the emancipation of the mind is a necessary step toward the evolution and development of a Chicano mentality. Finally, it proposes that the evolutionary process initially begins with a crisis situation which must not only be internalized by the individual but must be of such magnitude as to challenge and overcome the individual's present mentality, a mentality that has historically been bombarded by the

Americanization process and indoctrinated with the Capitalistic Ideology.[5]

Given that historical background, as well as the present socio-economic and political situation of the Chicano, we know that the evolutionary process is not an easy task. The evolutionary process is very difficult because it literally involves the wrenching change of one's own mentality. This change can have serious consequences on the individual's personality. Alienation and the denial of one's previous life style often occurs; however, difficult as it may be, it is a process that must be accomplished if the philosophy and ideals of the Chicano Movement--the promotion of self-identity, self-pride, self-determination and social change for the betterment of La Raza--are ever to succeed.

Ysidro Ramón Macias, in his paper the "Evolution of the Mind and a Plan for Political Action,"[6] defined the following four mentalities: Mexican-American, Chicano, Third World and Humanist. Macias defined each in terms of progressive political behavior: Mexican-American/assimilation, Chicano/self-determination, Third World/self-determination-coalition and Humanist/utopian brotherhood. (See diagram I.) I essentially agree with Macias's behavioral definitions. However, the process for the change from one to the other is not discussed. In other words, we still need to know what the determining factors are which contribute to the emancipation of the Mexican-American and eventually to the evolution of a Chicano mentality.

The Chicano Movement as a Revitalization Movement

An analysis of the Chicano Movement as a revitalization movement provides some possible answers as to why individuals abandon their present mentality and evolve toward a Chicano mentality. Concerning revitalization,

Diagram 1

Macias's

EVOLUTION OF THE MIND

Mexican-American	Chicano	Third World	Humanist
1. seeks assimilation	1. self-awareness	1. extension of Chicanismo--a coalition	1. concept of brotherhood
2. rejects heritage	2. self-respect	2. embraces those ethnic minorities who are suppressed	2. except individuals on their merits
3. lack of self identity	3. culture equal to Anglo culture	3. responsible to his community	3. respect for cultural differences
4. lack of self respect	4. aware of his history in this country	4. not willing to subjugate their culture	4. this mentality is the most difficult to attain
5. Protestant ethics of self-achievement	5. communal philosophy	5. self-determination	
6. no commitment to Chicano community	6. rejects Protestant ethic	6. do not allow cultural nationalism to interfere with intergroup relations	
7. boot straps mentality	7. commitment to Chicano communities	7. politically effective	
8. denies racism and oppression	8. Indian heritage exemplified		
9. politically ineffective	9. self-determination		
10. potential Chicano	10. Chicanismo		
	11. knows who the real enemy is--the system		
	12. politically effective		

Anthony Wallace states that the following conditions must be present:

> The persons involved in the process of revitalization must perceive their culture, or some major areas of it, as a system (whether accurately or not); they must feel that this cultural system is unsatisfactory; and they must innovate not merely discrete items, but a new cultural system, specifying new relationships as well as in some cases, new traits.[7]

Thus when a Chicano speaks in terms of Chicanos or La Raza and means to include all Mexican Americans residing in the United States, he is speaking in terms of the Chicano as a system. When a Chicano begins to realize that his status in the United States is that of a subjugated colonial, that the Chicano has been politically, economically, educationally and socially suppressed under the dominant Anglo society, he is identifying his dissatisfaction in terms of a cultural system. Finally, when a Chicano puts into practice the concepts of self-identity, self-pride, self-determination and cultural innovation, he is, in fact, creating a new cultural system. He is specifying new relationships, as well as, in some cases, new traits.

Grace Burruel and Melba Chavez in their paper, "Individual Involvement in the Chicano Movement," substantiate Wallace's position. Their analysis suggests that individual involvement is preceded by the following necessary conditions:

> Transition from identification as an individual to that of a member of the broader group; an explicit awareness of the problems facing Mexican Americans; and a decision to want to do something about their problem.[8]

Crisis Situation

These three conditions, however necessary for the process of revitalization, do not by themselves explain the process involved in individual mentality change and the evolution toward a Chicano mentality.

What then are the conditions which bring about individual mentality change and involvement? Burruel and Chavez state in their analysis, "that the level of involvement is related to the individual's perception of the movement and the factors responsible for the problems facing Mexican Americans, as well as external and internal pressures impinging upon him."[9]

The fact that the individual's perception of the movement and the problems facing Mexican Americans alone do not bring about individual mentality change is well taken. The external and internal pressures impinging upon the individual play a vital role in the emancipation of the mind and the development of a Chicano mentality. Wallace states, "The perception of stress, particularly of increasing stress, can be viewed as the common denominator of the panel of 'drives' or 'instincts' in every psychological theory."[10]

In other words, when individual Mexican Americans begin not only to perceive the problems of the Mexican American but also internalize those problems, a stressful situation tends to develop. And as long as this society is not willing to offer alternatives to reduce that stress then that situation becomes intensified. As Wallace states,

> We may now see more clearly what revitalization movements revitalize. Whenever an individual who is under chronic, physiologically measurable stress receives repeated information which indicates that his mentality does not lead to action which reduces the level of stress, he must choose between maintaining his present mentality

> and tolerating the stress, or changing the mentality in an attempt to reduce the stress. Changing the mentality involves changing the total Gestalt of his image of self, society, and culture, of nature and body, and of ways of action. It may also be necessary to make changes in the "real" system in order to bring mentality and "real" system into congruence. The effort to work a change in mentality and "real" system together so as to permit more effective stress reduction is the effort at revitalization; and the collaboration of a number of persons in such an effort is called a revitalization movement.[11]

Let me reemphasize this crucial point. When a stressful situation becomes intolerable, the individual must develop alternative strategies for reducing that stress. Through the process of self-criticism and self-analysis, a re-evaluation of goals and strategies is undertaken. The individual comes to the realization that prior strategies, such as the adoption of a Mexican American mentality, have not worked and in fact have historically added to the overall stressful situation. Thus emancipation of that individual occurs, and with it social change begins. (See diagram 2.)

> A Brown Beret leader, David Sanchez, summarized quite well our situation: For over 120 years the Mexican American has suffered at the hands of the establishment. He is discriminated against in schooling, housing, employment and in every other phase of life. Because of this situation, the Mexican American has become the lowest achiever of any minority group in the entire Southwest.[12]

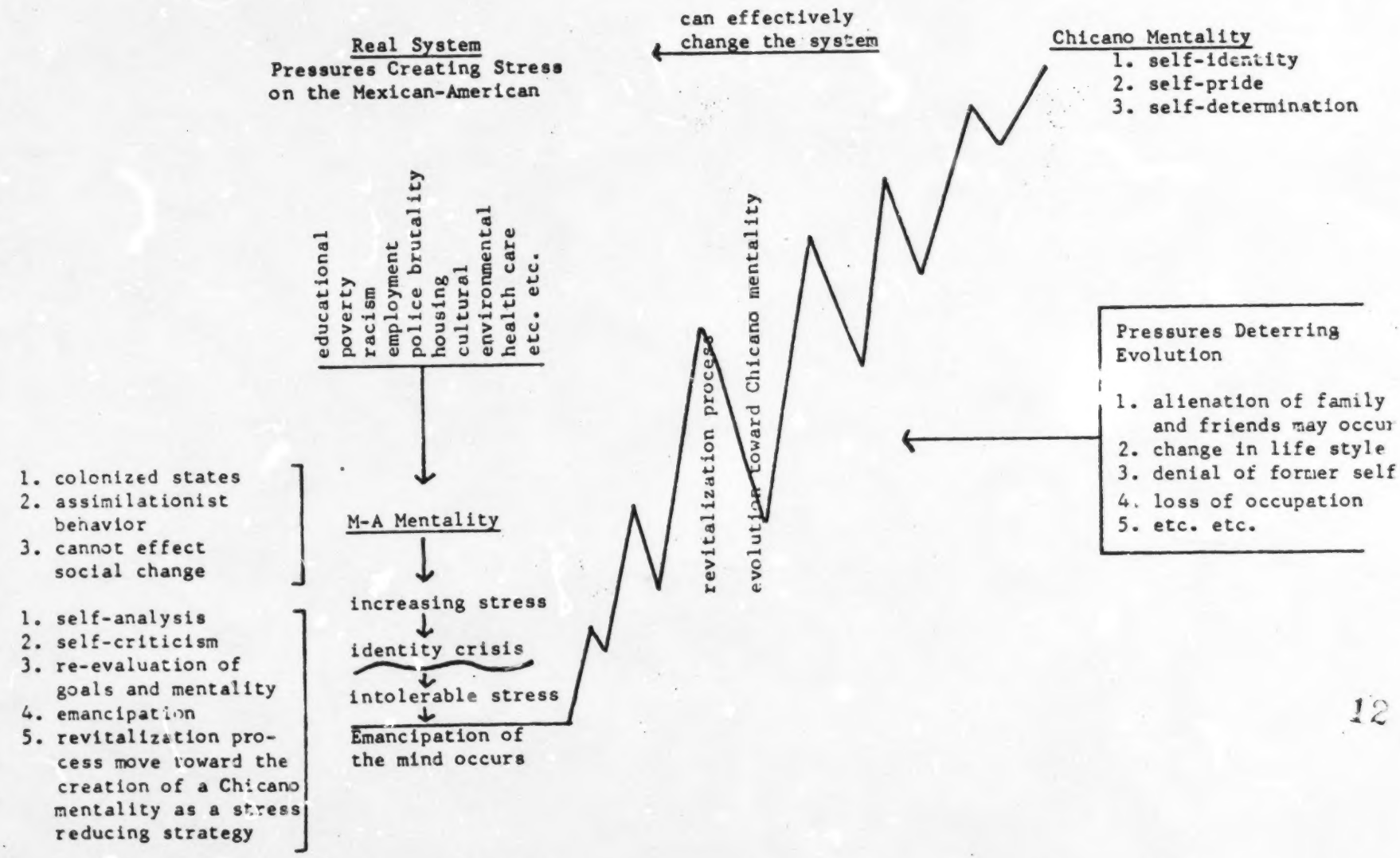
And then he added the same feeling I have about the Anglo:

> "To the Anglo, justice means just us."[13]

Diagram 2

Emancipation of the Mind and the Evolution

Toward a Chicano Mentality



11

12

Historically many Mexican Americans have chosen, at least on the surface, to accommodate as a strategy for reducing the stress that they have been forced to live under.[14] The stress has been a direct result of their living not only in a society which has institutionalized racism but in a society which has kept the Mexican American in a colonized status. The consequences for choosing other strategies have been disastrous. Historically it has meant imprisonment, repatriation, deportation, poverty, social ostracism and even death.

The movements of the early 1960's began to open up other possibilities. Mexican Americans began to explore other strategies for reducing stress. The search for an identity began, and a move away from an Anglo prone mentality toward the adoption of a Chicano mentality as a strategy for reducing stress was on. In addition, the development of new strategies to change the "real" system were being proposed. El Plan Espirtual de Aztlan,[15] El Plan de Santa Barbara,[16] La Raza Unida Party,[17] etc. were but a few strategies that were developed to change the system.

Thus during the 1960's and early 1970's, the social conditions which were leading or had led to the creation of crisis situations were brought clearly into focus. During the Viet Nam war, we could see that the Chicano was grossly overrepresented in combat zone and on casualty lists. On the college campuses, we realized that Chicano students, faculty and studies were virtually nonexistent. We were aware that the U.F.W. was in the process of unionizing campesinos. Because the problems were clear, battle for union representation raged in the fields through strikes and in the cities through boycotts.

But today the social conditions which produce crisis situations are not so clear. The war in Viet Nam has ended. On our college campuses there are EOP and Affirmative Action Programs--at least on paper. In addition, there are Chicano Studies Programs or Departments on virtually every college campus in the Southwest. Bilingual/Bicultural Education classes exist in many schools throughout the country. The U.F.W. has succeeded in gaining union representation and contracts. (We can now drink Gallo wine.) However, during the same period, many Chicano activist demonstrations, for example the 1970 Chicano National Moratoreum in East Los Angeles, were effectively squelched or at least discredited by the use of undercover police or FBI infiltrators.[18] This caused many potential Chicanos to back off, to disapprove, to view the Movement as merely a group of trouble makers. Thus, though the positive resolution of many crisis situations appeared to be both clear and effective on the one hand, the actions of the Establishment in the form of the police and FBI were dark, hidden and just as effective on the other. As a result, most of the social conditions which formerly created a crisis situation, a condition vital to the adoption of a Chicano mentality, have been defused, but the Establishment has not really been forced to change.

The result has been a decline in individual involvement. What happened? The fact is that we have been swindled by token programs, cosmetic integration, false hopes and lies.

The Role of Chicano Studies

We who are involved in the teaching of Chicano Studies must do more than teach Chicano history, culture research methodology and esoteric

paradigms. Chicano Studies must take an active role in the development of Chicano mentalitites as well as the perpetuation of social change. But it appears that Chicano Studies is becoming overly academic. We are now loosing sight of the fact that Chicano Studies was implemented as a direct result of massive student and community confrontations with institutions of higher education. It was, in fact, established out of a revolutionary mentality.

Along with its other academic purposes, Chicano Studies must expose the continuing suppression of our gente by unmasking the truth about the token programs, cosmetic integration, false hopes and lies. Token programs like Affirmative Action Programs are not working for us. In fact, they are working against our best interests. Institutions of higher education are now only required to make a good faith effort toward the hiring of Chicano faculty. It has become a mere paper game. Special admissions programs, those programs that have been responsible for the admission of thousands of Chicano students into institutions of higher education, are now being challenged by the Bakke case. But what can we do? What are we doing? Examining the issues? That's not enough. Serious Chicano studies must concern itself with more than simply the academic merits of vital issues. We must construct new strategies and tactics. Chicano studies must fight against being co-opted by the system. We must not forget that the system is still the problem and that confrontation is still the answer.

NOTES

1. Alfredo Cuellar, "Perspectives on Politics," in Introduction to Chicano Studies, ed. Livie Isauro Duran and H. Russell Bernard (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1973), p. 570.

2. Ysidro Ramón Macias, "Nuestros Antepasados y el Movimiento," Aztlán, Vol. 5, No. 1 and No. 2 (Spring and Fall, 1974), pp. 143-4.

3. Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," American Anthropologist, Vol. 58 (April, 1956), p. 266. Mentality for the purpose of this paper is synonymous with Wallace's definition of mazeway. A mazeway is nature, society, culture, personality, and body image, as seen by one person.

4. Wallace, p. 265. A revitalization movement is defined as a deliberate, organized conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture.

5. Rudolfo Acuña, Occupied America, the Chicano's Struggle Toward Liberation (San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1972), p. 147.

6. Ysidro Ramón Macias, "Evolution of the Mind and a Plan for Political Action" (unpublished paper), pp. 1-6.

7. Wallace, p. 265.

8. Grace Burruel and Melba Chavez, "Individual Involvement in the Chicano Movement," in La Causa Chicano: The Movement for Justice, ed. Margaret M. Mangold (New York: Family Service Association of America, 1975), p. 40.

9. Burruel and Chavez, p. 40.

10. Wallace, pp. 265-6.

11. Wallace, pp. 266-7.

12. Ruth S. Lamb, Mexican Americans: Sons of the Southwest (Claremont: Ocelot Press, 1970), p. 125.

13. Lamb, p. 125

14. Armando Navarro, "The Evolution of Chicano Politics," Aztlán, Vol. 5, No. 1 and 2 (Spring and Fall, 1974), pp. 61-6.

15. El Plan Espiritual De Aztlan was presented at the First Annual Chicano Youth Conference in Denver, Colorado in 1969. "El Plan espiritual de Aztlan, sets the theme that the Chicanos (La Raza de Bronze) must use

their nationalism as the key or common denominator for mass mobilization and organization. Once we are committed to the idea and philosophy of El Plan de Aztlan, we can only conclude that social, economic, cultural and political independence is the only road to total liberation from oppression, exploitation and racism. Our struggle then must be the congrol of our Barrios, campos, pueblos, lands, our economy, our culture, and our political life. El Plan commits all levels of Chicano society; the barrio, the campo, the ranchero, the writer, the teacher, the worker, the professional to la Causa."

16. Analyses and Positions by the Chicano Coordinating Council on Higher Education, El Plan de Santa Barbara: A Chicano Plan for Higher Education (Santa Barbara: La Causa Publications, 1970).

17. Richard Santillan, La Raza Unida (Los Angeles: Tlaquilo Publications, 1973).

18. Acuña, p. 268.

Bibliography

Acuña, Rudolfo. Occupied America: The Chicano's Struggle Toward Liberation. San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1972.

Almaguer, Tomas. "Toward the Study of Chicano Colonialism," Aztlán, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Spring 1971), pp. 7-21.

Analyses and Positions by the Chicano Coordinating Council on Higher Education. El Plan de Santa Barbara: A Chicano Plan for Higher Education. Santa Barbara: La Causa Publications, 1970.

Barrera, Mario. "The Study of Politics and the Chicano," Aztlán, Vol. 5, No. 1 and No. 2 (Spring and Fall 1974), pp. 9-26.

Burruel, Grace and Chavez, Melba. "Individual Involvement in the Chicano Movement," La Causa Chicana: The Movement for Justice. Edited by Margaret M. Mangold. New York: Family Service Association of America, 1975.

Cuellar, Alfredo. "Perspectives on Politics," Introduction to Chicano Studies. Edited by Livie Isauro Duran and H. Russell Bernard. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1973.

"El Plan Espiritual De Aztlán," in Rendon, Armando B. Chicano Manifesto. New York: Collier Books, 1971, pp. 336-7.

Garcia, Mario T. "The Californios of San Diego and the Politics of Accommodation, 1846-1860," Aztlán, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Spring 1975), pp. 69-86.

Juarez, Alberto. "The Emergence of El Partido de la Raza Unida: California's New Chicano Party," Aztlán, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Fall 1972), pp. 177-199.

Lamb, Ruth S. Mexican Americans: Sons of the Southwest. Claremont: Ocelot Press, 1970.

Macias, Ramón Ysidro. "Evolution of the Mind and a Plan for Political Action" (unpublished paper), pp. 1-6.

Macias, Ramón Ysidro. "Nuestros Antepasados y el Movimiento," Aztlán, Vol. 5, No. 1 and No. 2 (Spring and Fall, 1974), pp. 143-154.

Navarro, Armando. "The Evolution of Chicano Politics," Aztlán, Vol. 5, No. 1 and No. 2. (Spring and Fall, 1974), pp. 57-84.

Santillan, Richard. La Raza Unida. Los Angeles: Tlaquilo Publications, 1973.

Wallace, Anthony F. C. "Revitalization Movements," American Anthropologist, Vol. 58 (April, 1956), pp. 264-281.